Migration Statistics Quarterly Summary for Scotland

Release date: 22 May 2020
Next update: August 2020

A summary of the latest migration statistics for Scotland. This brings together data from a range of sources to give an overview of key migration trends in Scotland, and presents it alongside comparable UK-level data. It includes data published by National Records of Scotland (NRS), the Office for National Statistics (ONS), the Home Office, and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

Main points

- International migration has consistently added to Scotland's population since the EU expansion in 2004. Latest data show 20,200 more people coming to Scotland from overseas than leaving in the year to June 2019.
- The total number of non-British nationals living in Scotland (388,000 people) has increased over the most recent year. This was mainly driven by an increase in non-EU nationals.
- Polish remains the most common non-British nationality, with Polish nationals making up almost a quarter (23%) of all non-British nationals living in Scotland in 2019.
- Overseas nationals require a National Insurance number (NINo) to work in the UK and this can provide a view on work-related immigration (regardless of length of stay). Latest DWP data for the year ending March 2020 show there were 47,000 NINo allocations to overseas nationals in Scotland; 54% of these were to EU nationals. Whilst NINo allocations are higher than the previous year, there can be a lag to process applications. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is likely that demand for NINo services from non-UK nationals has been impacted. These effects will be more noticeable in the next quarterly release.

Impact of COVID-19 on migration statistics

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, multiple countries have enforced international travel restrictions since early 2020, affecting recent travel to and from the UK. The international migration statistics included in this summary cover different time periods, mostly before the outbreak of COVID-19. For initial insights into how recent international travel has been affected, please see ONS' Migration Statistics Quarterly Report which explores alternative travel data from the Civil Aviation Authority, Department for Transport and Eurotunnel.

This summary provides Scottish-specific secondary analysis of the Migration Statistics Quarterly Report (MSQR) published by ONS which focuses on the latest migration statistics at UK-level. ONS are leading a programme of work to transform migration statistics by making use of all available data to provide a richer and deeper understanding of migration. The MSQR has been reclassified as experimental statistics to support this period of development.

Latest migration statistics for Scotland and the UK

To fully understand migration trends, we need to consider all available data sources and look at not just year-on-year change but also evidence over a longer time series. The table below sets out the latest estimates across a range of sources, and analysis over time is then shown on later slides.

- In the year to June 2019, 20,200 more people came to Scotland from overseas than left, adding to the population. There were 39,900 people moving to Scotland from overseas and 19,700 people leaving in this period.
- The number of non-British nationals living in Scotland stood at 388,000 people, which is an increase from the previous year.
- There were 47,000 National Insurance number (NINo) allocations to overseas nationals in Scotland in the year to March 2020. Whilst this is an increase on the previous year, there can be a lag to process applications. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is likely that demand for NINo services from non-British nationals has been impacted. These effects will be more noticeable in the next quarterly release.

Measure	Source	Scotland			UK		
		Change over year	Latest estimate	Year ending	Change over year	Latest estimate	Year ending
Net migration	LTIM*	–	+20,200	Jun 2019	–	+270,000	Dec 2019
In migration	LTIM*	–	39,900	Jun 2019	↑	677,000	Dec 2019
Out migration	LTIM*	–	19,700	Jun 2019	–	407,000	Dec 2019
Non-British nationals	APS	↑	388,000	Dec 2019	–	6,227,000	Dec 2019
National Insurance number allocations	DWP	↑	47,000	Mar 2020	↑	757,700	Mar 2020

* Experimental statistics undergoing development

↑ Increase ↓ Decrease – Change is not statistically significant

Migration flows*

Estimates of long-term international migration (LTIM) to Scotland and the UK, measuring those with an intention to stay 12 months or more.

Migration continues to add to the population at both UK and Scotland level.

At Scotland level:

- In the year to June 2019, 20,200 more people came to Scotland from overseas than left.
- This was an increase from the previous year, however, this change was not statistically significant.

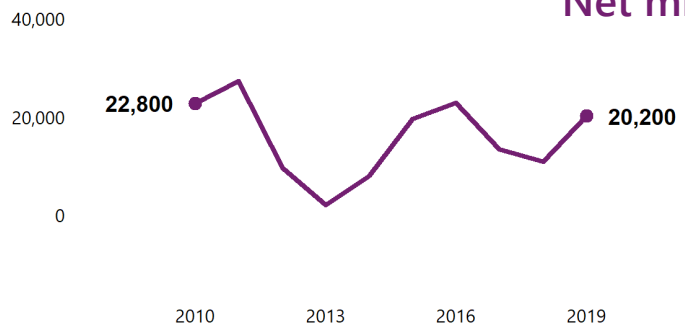
At UK level, in the year to December 2019:

- 270,000 more people came to the UK than left, adding to the UK's population.
- There were 677,000 people moving to the UK and 407,000 people leaving the UK in this period.
- Long term immigration, emigration and net migration have been broadly stable since the end of 2016.

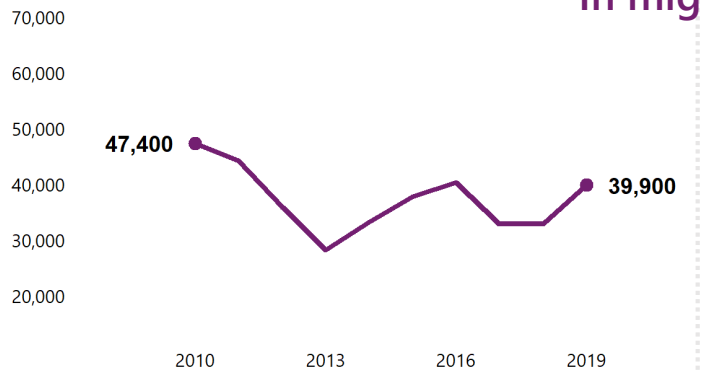
* Experimental statistics undergoing development

Scotland

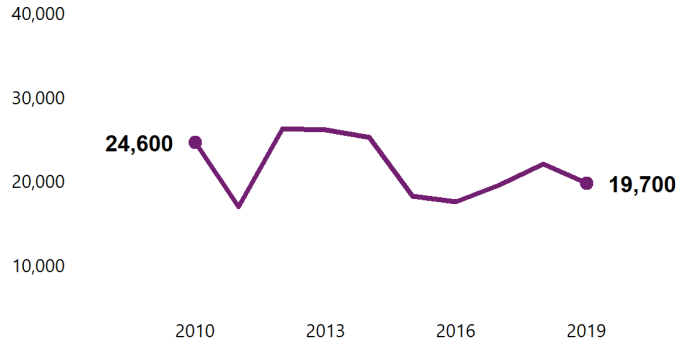
Net migration



In migration

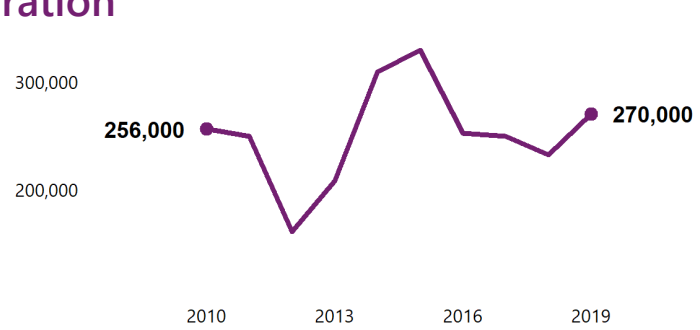


Out migration

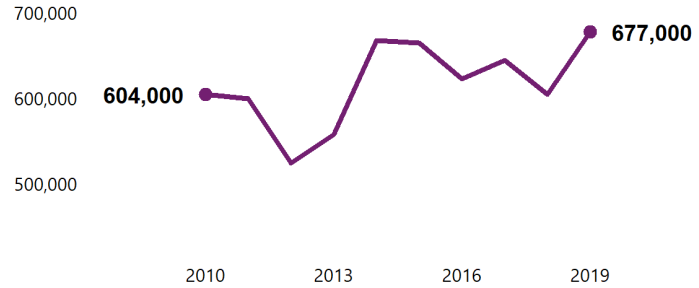


UK

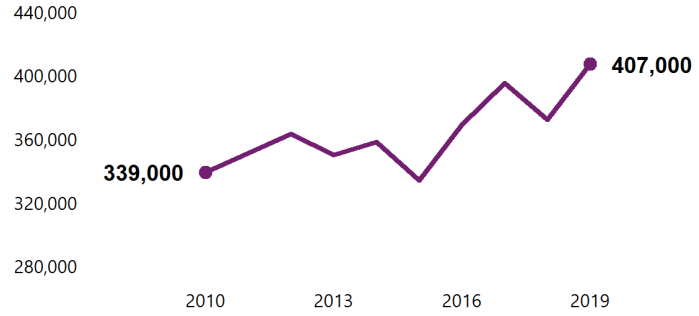
Net migration



In migration



Out migration



Migrant stocks

Estimates of the number of non-British nationals living in Scotland and the UK at a particular point in time, from the Annual Population Survey (APS).

In Scotland:

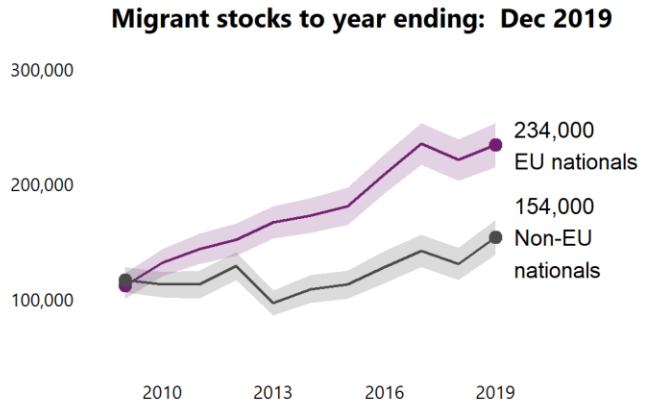
- There were 234,000 EU nationals living in Scotland in the year to December 2019, and over half of those people were nationals of EU8 countries.
- There were 154,000 non-EU nationals, accounting for 40% of the non-British population.
- Polish remained the most common non-British nationality in the year to December 2019, with Polish nationals accounting for almost a quarter (23%) of all non-British nationals living in Scotland.

In the UK:

- The non-British population of the UK was 6.2 million in the year to December 2019, where around 1 in 11 of the UK population had a non-British nationality and the majority (60%) of these held an EU nationality.
- Polish has been the most common non-British nationality (900,000) in the UK since 2007. Polish nationals accounted for 14% of the total non-British residents in the UK in the year ending December 2019.

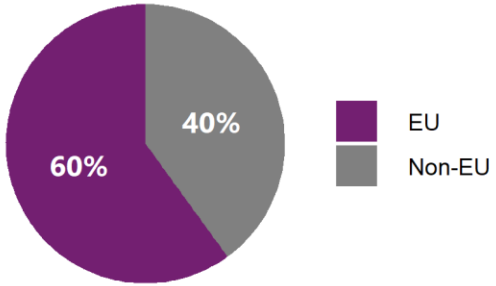
* Shaded sections indicate the 95% confidence intervals

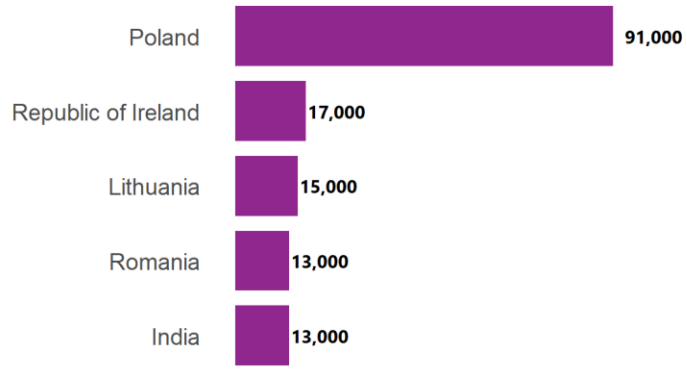
Scotland



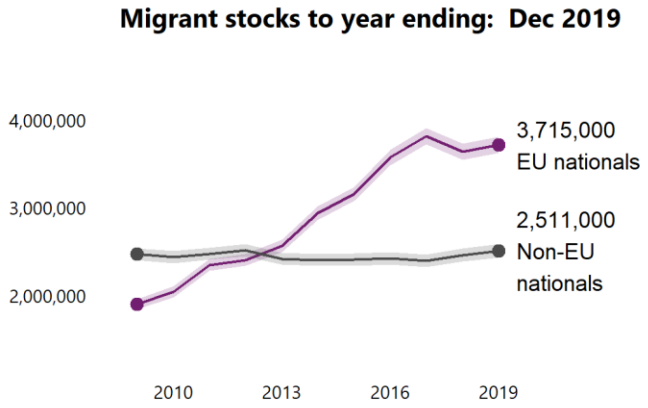
Non-British nationals in Scotland: 388,000

7.2% of total population



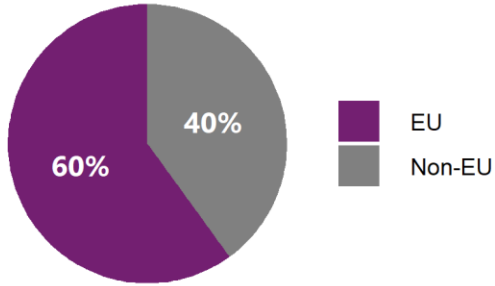


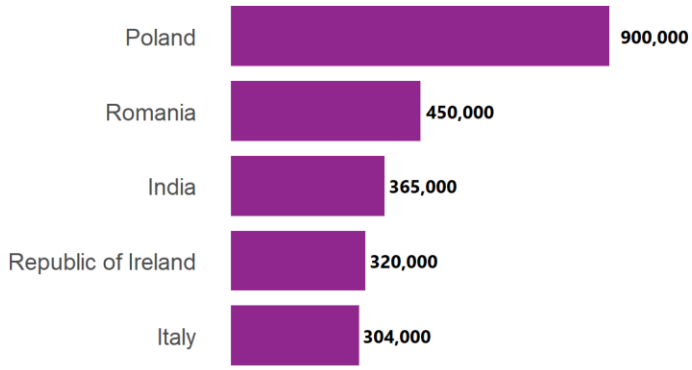
UK



Non-British nationals in the UK: 6,227,000

9.4% of total population





National Insurance number (NINo) allocations

Statistics on National Insurance numbers (NINo) allocated to adult overseas nationals come from the Department for Work and Pensions, and are updated every quarter. These are a measure of non-British nationals who are applying for a NINo for the first time, for the purpose of working and accessing benefits in the UK.

Scotland

In the year ending March 2020, there were a total of 47,000 NINo allocations to adult overseas nationals in Scotland (up by 19% from previous year).

- 25,600 of these allocations were to (non-UK) EU nationals (up by 6% from previous year).
- 21,300 of these allocations were to non-EU nationals (up by 40% from previous year).

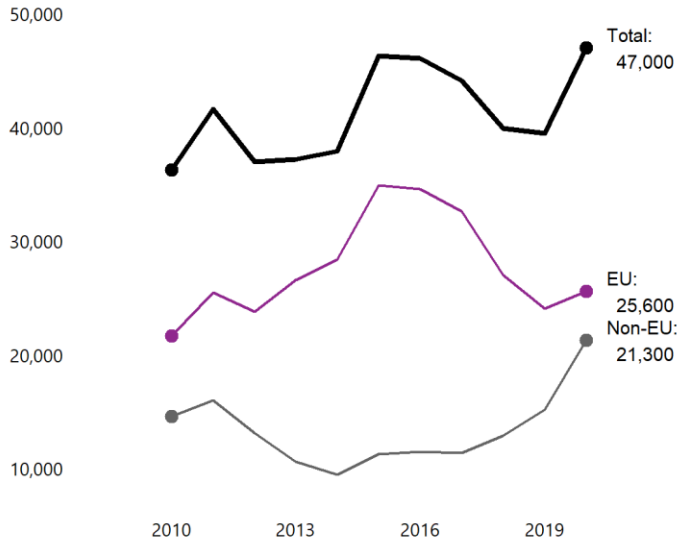
UK

In the year ending March 2020, there were a total of 757,700 NINo allocations to adult overseas nationals in the UK (up by 17% from previous year).

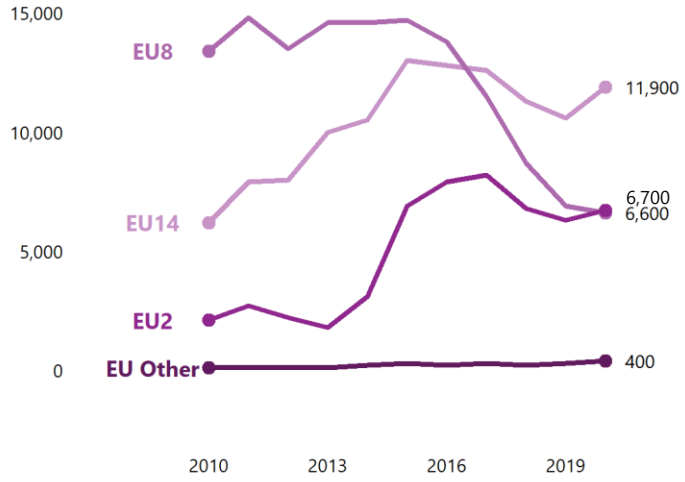
- 430,100 of these allocations were to (non-UK) EU nationals (up by 3% from previous year).
- 326,400 of these allocations were to non-EU nationals (up by 45% from previous year).

Scotland

NINo allocations to year ending: Mar 2020

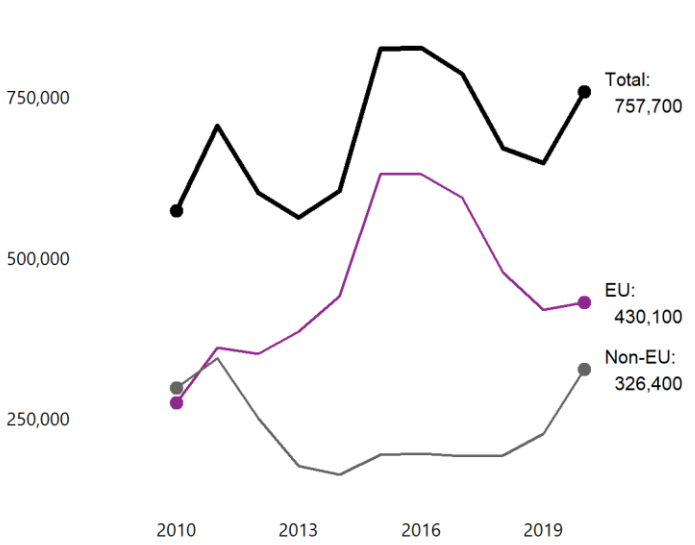


NINo allocations for EU groups to year ending: Mar 2020

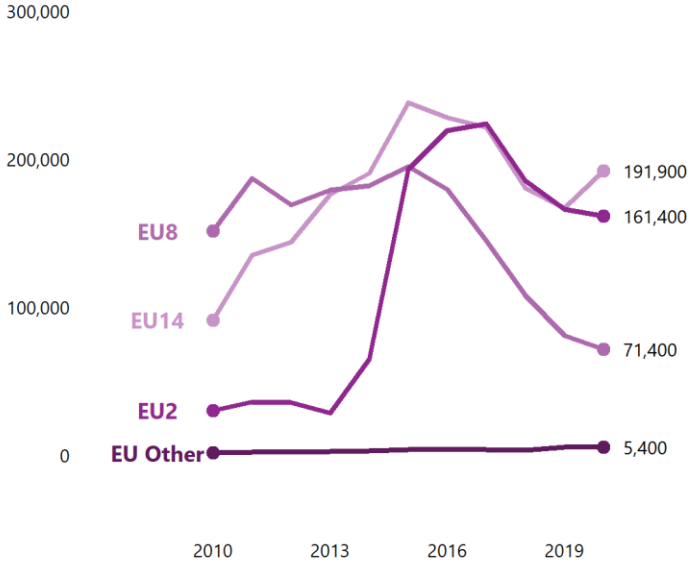


UK

NINo allocations to year ending: Mar 2020



NINo allocations for EU groups to year ending: Mar 2020



National Insurance number (NINo) allocations

Scotland

UK

In the year ending March 2020:

- From the EU, **Scotland** received most registrations from EU14 countries (11,900); from non-EU, Scotland received most registrations from South Asia (5,400).
- From the EU, **the UK** received most registrations from EU14 countries (191,900); from non-EU, the UK received most registrations from South Asia (122,800).

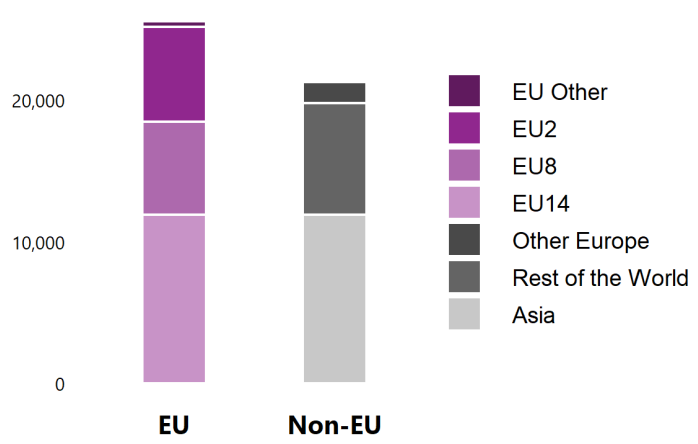
The most common individual countries applying for NINo:

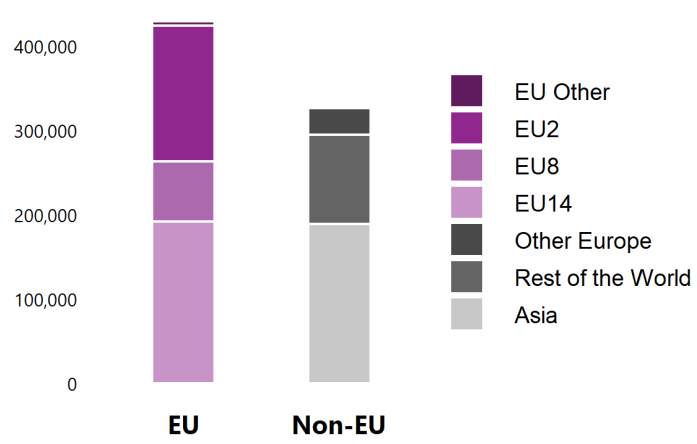
- **In Scotland**, Romania (5% increase from previous year) from the EU and India (41% increase from previous year) from outside of the EU.
- **In the UK**, Romania (6% decrease from previous year) from the EU and India (65% increase from previous year) from outside the EU.

The Scottish council area that had the most new registrations in the year to March 2020 was Glasgow City (13,300, 28% of total registrations).

At UK level, the local authority with the most registrations was Newham (21,200, 3% of total registrations).

NINo allocations by nationality



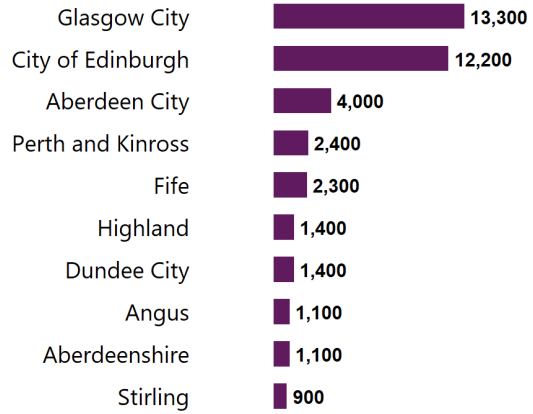


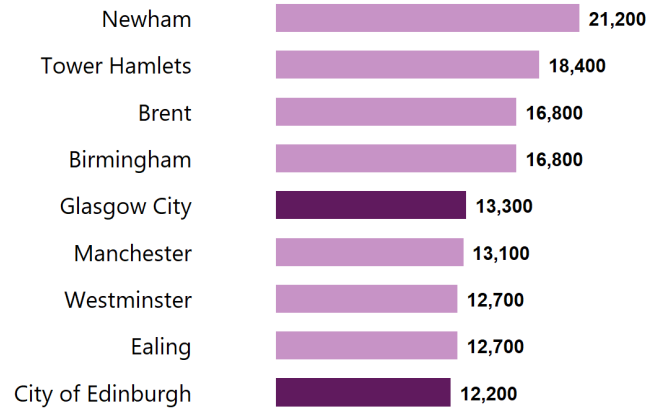
Top 5 EU and non-EU countries

EU		Non-EU	
Romania	4,500	India	3,900
Poland	3,800	Syria	1,700
Spain	2,900	China	1,300
Italy	2,400	United States	1,300
Bulgaria	2,200	Nigeria	1,200

EU		Non-EU	
Romania	124,300	India	87,700
Italy	49,400	Pakistan	21,500
Poland	38,300	Nigeria	14,800
Bulgaria	37,100	China	14,400
Spain	36,900	United States	13,500

Top 10 local authorities





Refugees & Citizenship

Scotland

UK

The data in this section comes from the Home Office. The refugee data is released quarterly, three months after the reporting period. It covers Refugees (and others) resettled under the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme. The citizenship data is released once a year in May and it has a 6 month lag. It indicates the number of people attending British citizenship ceremonies in the past year.

Refugees

In the year ending March 2020, there were 531 refugees (6% decrease from previous year) resettled in Scotland and 4,030 (7% decrease from previous year) in the whole of the UK.

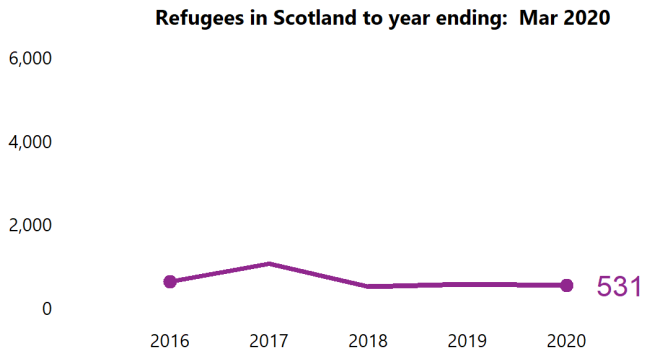
In Scotland, Edinburgh City had the most resettled refugees at 135 (125 in previous year). In the UK, it was Birmingham at 137 (122 in previous year).

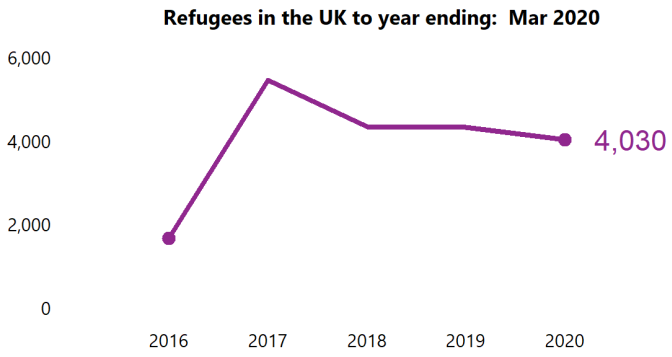
Citizenships

The labels on the graph indicate the number of people attending British citizenship ceremonies and change over year for each authority.

In Scotland, Edinburgh City had the most people attending British citizenship ceremonies (25% of total attendees in Scotland). In the whole of the UK, it was Birmingham (2% of total attendees in the UK).

Refugees



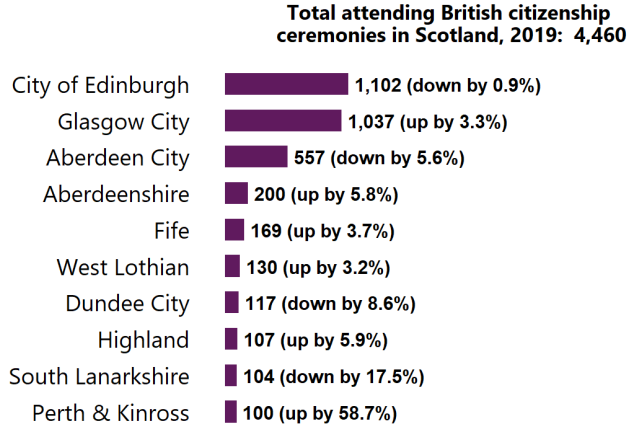


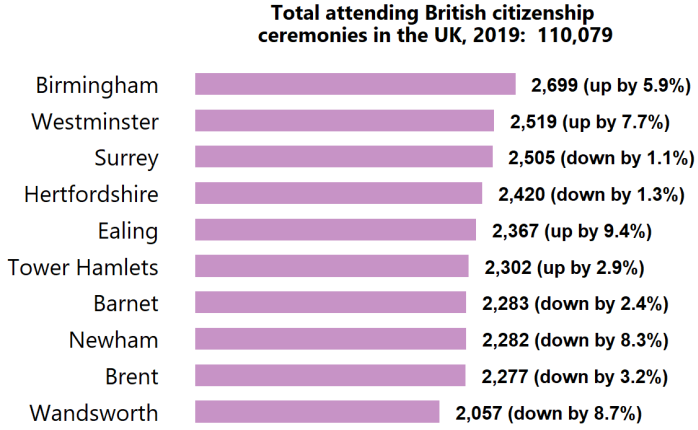
Top 5 Authorities

Authority	Resettled Refugees	% of Total
City of Edinburgh	135	25.4
North Ayrshire	67	12.6
Glasgow City	41	7.7
Fife	28	5.3
Renfrewshire	28	5.3

Authority	Resettled Refugees	% of Total
Birmingham	137	3.4
City of Edinburgh	135	3.3
Gateshead	107	2.7
Fermanagh and Omagh	106	2.6
Coventry	96	2.4

Citizenships





Summary of data sources

Long-Term International Migration (LTIM), ONS
These statistics are published quarterly as part of the Migration Statistics Quarterly Report. They measure the number of migrants entering and leaving the country in any given period. They are typically called migrant 'flows' and can be used to calculate net migration (the difference between immigration and emigration). Estimates are largely based on migrant intentions to stay in Scotland/UK for 12 months or more. The data is sourced mainly from the International Passenger Survey.

Population by Country of Birth and Nationality, ONS and NRS
These statistics are published twice a year by ONS and NRS. They measure the size of the population (non-UK born and non-British nationals) at a particular point in time. They are typically called migrant 'stocks' and are sourced from the Annual Population Survey.

National Insurance number allocations (NINo) to adult overseas nationals entering the UK, DWP
This is administrative data updated each quarter by DWP. The NINo statistics count the volume of registrations to adult non-UK nationals over a calendar quarter. A NINo is generally required if looking to work or claim benefits. The statistics are not a count of the number of adult non-UK nationals currently living in Scotland/the UK.

Immigration statistics, Home Office
The refugees resettled data is published every quarter and covers refugees (and others) resettled under the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme. The Citizenship data is updated once a year and indicates the number of people attending British citizenship ceremonies in a given year. Both of these measures are from administrative data published by the Home Office.

Migration Statistics, NRS
Latest migration flows for Scotland published by NRS. These include breakdowns for flows between Scotland and overseas, Scotland and the rest of the UK, and internal migration within Scotland.

Local Area Migration, NRS
This tool brings together migration statistics from a range of sources for council and NHS Board areas in Scotland. It is published annually by NRS.

Further information about the strengths and limitations of each data source are available within the publications (use links above).